

ELCE News

9th September 2023

Starting and starting again

Such a phrase might reflect an attitude to waking up each day, Luther's Small Catechism regarding Baptism and daily repentance, that I've begun *ELCE News* a number of times over these past months, returning to school for a year of learning – even if the walls or foundations are dubious because we learn in any environment, or all of the above!

I can leave your days and your faith to your devotions, worship, your pastor – and, of course, to the Lord. We all can hope for the best environments in which to learn while encouraging learners nonetheless that learning does begin with the learner. And I can make sure that, this time, I finish the *ELCE News*!

However this year has seen the 'tyranny of the now' happen more and more. This means that our ELCE 'local life' has remained busy and active while aspects of our synodical life has been squeezed. Synodical tasks and meetings – particularly those with deadlines – have all been met but not all our committees are as active nor have all tasks been completed when we would like. (I'm particularly conscious of the strategic planning follow-through and the admin regarding the constitutional documents that is still ongoing.) Time is a limited gift from God and while everyone is busy not all tasks have been completed as quickly as one would hope. But I am encouraged by God's faithfulness to us his little flock, for Jesus keeps comes to us in worship and goes with us 'back out' into the world – we can live each day with the confidence from last Synod that "the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22,23 ESV).

Our 69th Annual Synod is in November

The provisional date of **17th and 18th November** is **confirmed**. The venue is still being discussed.

The deadline for the paperwork for this Synod is Monday 16th October. The two key items of paperwork are the **resolutions** and the **reports**.

Resolutions are the main mechanism through which the business of Synod is enacted. Congregations and ELCE Commissions, Boards, and Committees can submit resolutions to Synod. Resolutions guide and shape our Synodical life – and help us walk together.

Reports are the mechanism that reflect the business and life of Synod particularly in the past synodical term – which is why the ELCE Commissions, Boards, and Committees report each Synod – and

Congregations have always shared their stories about what is happening locally.

More details about the 69th Annual Synod will be sent out after the Executive Council meeting (on 16th Sept) but the important thing to note are the dates ...

16th October – deadline for resolutions and reports – to be sent to the ELCE Secretary and the ELCE Chairman;
17th, 18th November – the 69th ELCE Synod.

The Ghana Project

I am sure we all smiled, clapped hands, maybe high-fived, to hear the news that the motorbike for Pastor Tito had been purchased. And seeing the pictures was lovely! At the end of June, the Board for Overseas Missions wrote to us with thanksgiving and joy at this wonderful ELCE support from among us. Early last month, I received an email from Pastor Tito ...

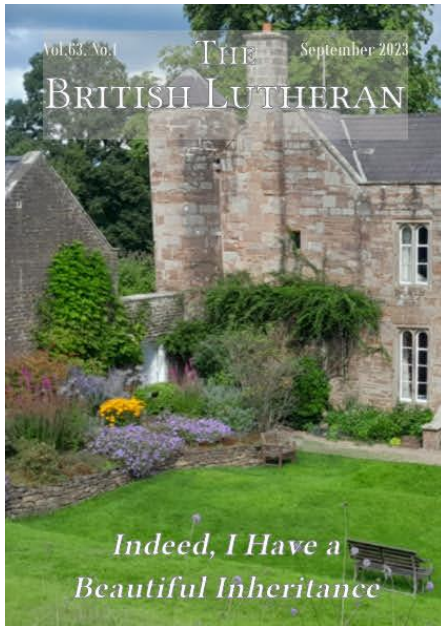
*Dear Rt. Rev. George,
Special greetings to you in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Indeed! I am moved by the spirit of God to say a very big thank you for your prayer, and all concerns about the mission work in Spanish Sunyani, Ghana. I wish to express my profound gratitude for the wonderful support of the motorbike for the work at Sunyani mission. It is my prayer and hope that, the Lord bless this gift as it [is used] in His vineyard for His mission accomplishment! I thank all congregations of ELCE, and individuals [in] Board of Overseas Missions who facilitate this project to make it happened. Wishing you God's richest blessings, thank you!
Rev. Emmanuel & family*



We look forward to hearing from the Board for Overseas Missions how else we can help the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana.

There is a lot happening

We look forward to the next issue of *The British Lutheran* – out next week – in which there are reports about this year's European Lutheran Conference and last year's International Lutheran Council's World Conference.



There is a lot happening internationally. This summer there has also been the Corpus Christ event in Latvia for young adults (the 2024 one will be in Wittenberg), the European Lutheran Sunday School Association Conference in Denmark (postponed from 2022), and the ELCE's attendance at the LCMS' International Church Relations Forum (a first) held in conjunction with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod's General Convention.

In October there are some events happening in Wittenberg ...

- The International Church Relations Conference sponsored by the LCMS
- The 30th Anniversary Celebration of the International Lutheran Council (in its current iteration)
- The North European Lutheran Academy Symposium

In this quickly changing world, it is good to support each other locally – as we do in the ELCE – but it is increasingly becoming noticed and appreciated that wider support – global support – is encouraging and helpful.

And within our borders ...

During the year I have attended various ecumenical meetings to listen and learn from others and to show that the ELCE is here – the “oldest British Lutheran church”. The Lutheran history and tapestry in the UK are both long and intricate. Today, Lutherans are found in various Lutheran groups – there is the Council of Lutheran Churches which is an umbrella group for the overseas Lutheran churches here which all have their congregations and there is also the other British

Lutheran church – the Lutheran Church in Great Britain (LCiGB); there is the LCiGB itself outside of the CLC; there is the Synod of German-Speaking Lutheran, Reformed, and United Congregations in Great Britain; and there is us. The ELCE is a member of the International Lutheran Council while all the other Lutheran church bodies are members of the Lutheran World Federation.

In the ecumenical world of other Lutherans and of other Christians, it is important to speak our theological truth and pastoral practice and often to burst the bubble of assumptions that all Lutherans are identical or that the ELCE is not British (but American). This October, ELCE Vice Chairman, Pastor Jon Ehlers, will be attending the Churches Together in England's Enabling Group (think of it as its Synod whereby the office holders and trustees give their reports to the members – and the ELCE became a member in 2011). The Lutheran Church in Great Britain is having a special Synod this month to re-elect its bishop and we will continue our discussions with them later in the year (which have been in abeyance for a number of years). The Council of Lutheran Churches (formerly the Lutheran Council of Great Britain) will celebrate its 75th anniversary on 31st October and the ELCE is linked to that history as its formation had as a central figure and its first Chairman The Rev. E George Pearce (the ELCE's first Chairman). The ELCE would withdraw from the Council in the late 1950s nevertheless for about the past 15 years we have been in contact with the Council and have attended their Annual Meetings (as visitors). When details of the 75th anniversary celebrations are known I will forward them to you.

Ecumenical relations may seem of little worth but if we believe that the holy, Christian / catholic, apostolic church is one then in the spirit of the Augsburg Confession we need to be engaged in the discussions that are happening and in sharing the Gospel truth and practice as we understand them.

Thanks for reading!

God bless! ... He always does!

– Pastor George Samiec

